



King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division 2002 Briefing Paper

EXPANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

The 2001-2003 Operating Budget, Chapter 7, Laws of 2001, E2, provides for the development and operation of community support services for state hospital patients with substantial barriers to community placement who no longer require active inpatient psychiatric treatment. In accordance with this proviso, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is implementing the Expanding Community Services (ECS) Initiative.

The 2001-2003 Revised Omnibus Operating Budget (2002 Supplemental) added funding to the ECS Initiative for the development of new community services for participants in the Program for Adaptive Living Skills (PALS) at Western State Hospital (WSH). The budget provides funding to enable thirty PALS program participants who no longer require PALS psychiatric care but face a variety of other barriers to community placement to return to community settings.

Individuals who will be transitioned as part of the ECS Initiative currently reside on the wards of the Adult Psychiatric Unit (APU) and the Gero-Medical Unit (GMU) of WSH, the Geriatric Medical Unit (GMU) of Eastern State Hospital (ESH), and the PALS program on the grounds of WSH. Thirty patients will be transitioned in each phase with a ward being closed at WSH, ESH and PALS following each transition date.

MHCADSD is participating on the Implementation Committee of the ECS Initiative and is working with the State Mental Health Division (MHD) and other Department of Social and Health Services entities on the transition of ECS eligible PALS program participants and WSH GMU patients. MHCADSD has issued a Request For Information (RFI) to identify providers interested in participating in the program and will be preparing a proposal to the State.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

- Funding for the ECS Initiative is available through June of 2003, with funding beyond that time to be determined by the Legislature and Governor through the 2003-2005 budget process.
- With funding for the ECS Initiative being uncertain beyond June of 2003 and overall state budget decreases, providers are reluctant to develop new programs to serve this population.
- Initial profiles of PALS program participants reveal multiple barriers to placement and for many of these individuals, long histories of prior failed community placements.

DATA:

The State MHD will be providing an evaluation of the ECS Initiative. King County Regional Support Network (RSN) and provider(s) participating in the project will be collecting data for the evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION/LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

The ECS Initiative offers a funding opportunity to develop new program models and focus on creative housing supports for persons with a history of unsuccessful placements in the community. It is recommended that King RSN continue participation in this project as it has the potential for reducing the need for long-term hospitalization and increasing community tenure for this population. However, King RSN needs to be cognizant of the additional community resources these clients may require.